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Trafficking in women and girls

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/149, the present report compiles information on successful interventions and strategies, as well as the gaps, in addressing the gender dimensions of the problem of trafficking in persons and provides recommendations on the strengthening of human rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive approaches within comprehensive and balanced efforts to address trafficking in persons.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/149, on trafficking in women and girls, the General Assembly urged Governments to devise, enforce and strengthen effective measures to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in women and girls. The Assembly called upon Governments to, inter alia, address the factors that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to being trafficked; criminalize all forms of trafficking in persons; strengthen prevention and awareness-raising action; support and protect victims of trafficking; encourage the media and business sectors to cooperate in efforts to eliminate trafficking; and enhance information-sharing and data-collection capacity.

2. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventy-first session a report that compiles information on interventions and strategies, as well as gaps, in addressing the gender dimensions of the problem of trafficking in persons and provides recommendations on the strengthening of human rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive approaches to address the issue. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request and is based on, inter alia, information received from Member States, entities of the United Nations system and other organizations. It covers the period since the issuance of the previous report (A/69/224). The report takes into account some broader considerations for addressing trafficking in women and girls, primarily their increased vulnerability in the context of migration, as well as during natural disasters and armed conflict.

II. Global and regional normative developments

3. Trafficking in human beings has been recognized by Member States not only as a human rights violation but also as a critical issue for development. The issue features strongly in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has specific targets under the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 (target 5.2), Goal 8 (target 8.7) and Goal 16 (target 16.2). The new development agenda clearly posits that all women and girls, regardless of their location, situation and circumstances or migratory status, should be entitled to a life free from violence and its consequences. Trafficking in women and girls is acknowledged as a form of violence against women and girls and the Goals explicitly commit to its elimination. The Goals also call on Member States to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned migration policies. Trafficking is antithetical to safe, orderly and regular migration. The Goals seek to address all inequalities, including those based on gender, and should therefore constitute a basis for Member States and United Nations entities to address trafficking through measures that take into account its global reach and by adopting a human rights-based approach.

4. The inclusion of trafficking within the Goals builds upon and reinforces ongoing efforts of the United Nations intergovernmental and expert bodies, which guide anti-trafficking measures through resolutions and recommendations addressing the issue. For example, at its seventieth session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons (resolution 70/179). The Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (resolution 2015/23). In the agreed conclusions adopted at its

the sixtieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women acknowledged the positive contribution of migrant women workers to inclusive growth and sustainable development and recognized that trafficking in persons disproportionately affects women and girls. General Recommendation No. 32 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women (CEDAW/C/GC/32) made reference to the persistence of other forms of exploitation associated with displacement, such as trafficking. Furthermore, links between trafficking and migration, and specific risks for women and girls, were highlighted in the report on violence against women migrant workers (A/70/205). Those links were also acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution on violence against women migrant workers (resolution 70/130).

5. The Human Rights Council has also identified links between migration and trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Apart from the resolution on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (resolution 26/8), the Council has adopted several resolutions that are relevant to the issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, and its links with migration. Those include resolutions on human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality (26/14), in which it is stressed that women and girls deprived of nationality as well as stateless children are at greater risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation; on the protection of the human rights of migrants, including migrants in transit (29/2), which recognizes the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of migrant women and girls; and on unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights (29/12), which highlights the exposure of those children and adolescents to abuses such as trafficking, including for forced labour, sexual abuse and exploitation.

6. At its nineteenth to twenty-fifth sessions, the Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review made 659 recommendations relating to trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Those recommendations were addressed to 94 of the 98 Member States under review, and stressed the need to identify, protect and support victims of trafficking, including those exposed to trafficking through migration processes. The findings demonstrate that trafficking in persons remains a significant and serious global issue and that further efforts are required by the majority of States.

7. The human rights treaty bodies,[1] established under the core human rights treaties, continued to address the issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in their concluding observations on the reports submitted by States parties. They specifically highlighted efforts to combat trafficking in migrant workers.

8. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, continued to examine the impact of anti-trafficking measures on the human rights of victims. In her annual report to the General Assembly in 2014, a 10-year assessment of the mandate, the Special Rapporteur drew the attention of the General Assembly to the importance of safe migration processes, based on a human rights

[1] The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

framework, as a means of preventing trafficking (A/69/269). In her report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, in 2015, the Special Rapporteur stated that meaningful and substantive due diligence, based on a human rights-based approach, provided the necessary framework to ensure policy coherence between anti-trafficking policy and other related policy areas, such as immigration and labour-market policies (A/70/260). In her 2016 thematic report to the Human Rights Council, she focused on the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict situations, noting the particular vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking in such situations (A/HRC/32/41).

III. Current context

A. Trafficking in women and girls as a human rights challenge

9. Trafficking remains a serious human rights violation of which the majority of detected victims are women and girls. Almost every country is affected as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims. The most recent *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*,[2] produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2014, provides an overview of the levels, patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at the global, regional and national levels, and it is based on trafficking cases detected mainly between 2010 and 2012. According to the report, women and girls accounted for 70 per cent of all trafficking victims detected globally. Moreover, the trafficking of children appears to be increasing, as 33 per cent of all victims are children, two out of three victims being girls. Approximately half of all detected victims of trafficking are adult women.

10. Women and girls are trafficked particularly for certain forms of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and, more recently, forced marriage. According to the report, 53 per cent of all detected victims of trafficking in 2011 were subjected to sexual exploitation. The vast majority of them were women and girls, representing 97 per cent of the victims of trafficking for that purpose.

11. Efforts continue, including by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to rescue and assist trafficked women and girls. In 2014, approximately half of all victims assisted by IOM (49 per cent) were female, 17 per cent of them girls. The majority of women and girls assisted by IOM had been trafficked for the purpose of forced labour, which includes domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Data provided by IOM for 2015 show similar patterns. Those figures show a slight decrease in the number of women and girls assisted since the previous report of the Secretary-General on the issue (A/69/224). IOM acknowledges that those data are not necessarily representative of trends in the prevalence of global human trafficking, but instead reflect areas where IOM has the most extensive programming.

12. Persistent gender inequality is a root cause of this human rights violation alongside a persistent demand for trafficked women and girls. The harms of trafficking are known to be more severe for women and girls than for men and boys given the exposure of the former to specific forms of exploitation such as sexual exploitation and violence, domestic servitude and forced marriage. In addition, the

[2] *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2014* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.10).

ability of women to access support and other services is limited. Together, these factors make the impacts long lasting and recovery particularly difficult. It is therefore important that countries apply a gendered approach to trafficking, with respect to both prevention and response, to ensure that the needs of women and girls are met.

13. Ironically, although they are among its primary victims, women feature prominently among those convicted of the crime. While traffickers tend to be adult males, more women are convicted for trafficking offences than for most other crimes (10 to 15 per cent for crimes in general versus 38 per cent for trafficking crimes). That is a significant anomaly in crime trends, which has not been adequately explored or addressed. According to UNODC, a possible explanation for the situation is that women are more often used in "low-ranking" activities in the trafficking process, and they are more likely to interact with victims, including through the recruitment process, which exposes them to easier detection and exposure during victim testimonies. While that may explain, in part, why so many women are convicted, further research and analysis is required given the significant variation in the data concerning women convicted of crimes generally versus their convictions for trafficking. Questions remain as to the possibility that many women convicted of trafficking have themselves been victims of such crimes and are coerced into participating in the recruitment of new victims.

B. Special vulnerabilities in the context of conflict, humanitarian emergencies and migration

14. To date, the issue of trafficking in persons and the mechanisms to respond have been addressed mainly as a development issue. Since the previous report, however, more attention has been paid to trafficking in persons during conflicts and disasters and the potential vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking during migration processes.[3] The intensification of migration flows over the past few years, both through regular and irregular means, has increased migrants' exposure and risk of falling prey to traffickers. The situation becomes clearer in the context of recent data that indicate that almost 60 million people had been forcibly displaced by the end of 2014, including refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. Women and men accounted for almost half (49 per cent) of the total number of refugees, women and men being equal in number. Children constituted 51 per cent of all refugees. Those figures demonstrate the large numbers of people who are potentially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, in particular the forms of exploitation that most affect women and girls, such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and child, early and forced marriage.

15. Reports have highlighted the targeting of women and girls during conflicts for sexual exploitation and slavery,[4] and non-State armed groups have reportedly abducted women and girls for the purpose of trafficking for sexual exploitation,

[3] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "World at war: global trends: forced displacement in 2014". Available from www.unhcr.org/en-us/statistics/country/556725e69/unhcr-global-trends-2014.html.

[4] International Organization for Migration (IOM), "Addressing human trafficking and exploitation in times of crisis, July 2015". Available from .https://publications.iom.int/system/files/addressing_human_trafficking.pdf.

domestic servitude and child, early and forced marriage.[5] During conflict and disaster, criminal activities, including organized crime, can increase owing to the weakening or absence of the rule of law and the lack of capacity to respond to such crimes.[6] That creates an environment which can foster increased trafficking. Furthermore, in such situations, the national institutions and structures, as well as the community and family support networks, which usually help to protect people from such exploitation, often are no longer in place.

16. The risk of trafficking in such circumstances can also result in other forms of exploitation. For example, in situations where parents fear that their children, especially girls, may be trafficked, they may instead turn to what they see as preventative measures, such as child, early and forced marriage. Humanitarian crisis and post-crisis responses must actively address the need to protect and prevent trafficking in persons and ensure that those measures are gender sensitive and responsive to the specific needs of women and girls. The problem of trafficking in various contexts needs to be viewed along a conflict and crisis-peace-development continuum.

17. There is a strong connection between trafficking in persons and migration. Many people migrate driven by the hope for a better future. Such migration is often the result of persistent inequality and discrimination, lack of access to educational and economic opportunities, the challenges of being trapped in the informal economy, including in unpaid family work, and limited access to opportunities or to participation in the benefits of the economy and the broader society. Whether they go through regular or irregular migration processes, those migrants, especially women and girls, may be more vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation as well as other forms of exploitation (see A/HRC/32/41). Such situations lead many women to take risks associated with irregular migration.

18. Even documented migrants, such as women migrant workers, are at risk of being trafficked and/or exploited in their new workplace, given that they have minimum leverage to negotiate the conditions of their work and may have limited knowledge of their rights. Discriminatory migration laws and policies, which restrict the ability of women, or particular groups of women, to freely leave or enter a country or district or to freely seek or change their employment, can increase women's vulnerability to trafficking and labour exploitation.[7]

19. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants has stated that the systemic abuse of migrants continues despite the emergence of bilateral labour mobility agreements intended to improve social protections and curb illicit activity (see A/HRC/32/40). This includes violations of their rights that increase their risk of exposure to human trafficking. In this context, the Special Rapporteur stressed that, while States retain the sovereign authority to regulate immigration, even when

[5] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, "Report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in Iraq: 6 July-10 September 2014". Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/UNAMIHRReports.aspx.

[6] Sara Craggs and others, "Responding to human trafficking and exploitation in times of crisis", Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative, issue brief (IOM, 2016). Available from https://micicinitiative.iom.int/issue-briefs.

[7] OHCHR, "Recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders", 2014. Available from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR_Recommended_Principles_Guidelines.pdf.

making immigration decisions, under international law States are still required to respect, promote and fulfil their human rights obligations to all, regardless of their status (ibid., para. 24). This includes ensuring that migration and labour laws and policies are in line with human rights standards and that gender inequality and discrimination are explicitly considered in such laws and policies.

C. Global and national responses to trafficking

20. Although responses to trafficking have relied strongly on the criminal justice system, particularly after the crime has occurred, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators remain limited. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, entered into force in December 2003 and guides the development of responses. As at August 2014, of the 173 countries considered for the *Global Report* analysis, 146 (85 per cent) criminalize all aspects of trafficking in persons explicitly listed in the Palermo Protocol.[2] According to the *Global Report*, however, large and highly populated countries in Asia and South America still have only partial or no legislation. Considering the population sizes of those countries and their partial or complete absence of relevant legislation, this means that almost 2 billion people still live in a situation where trafficking has not been criminalized as required by the Palermo Protocol. This leads the authors of the *Global Report* to conclude that "this situation combined with a very low number of convictions makes trafficking in persons a crime of vast impunity".[2]

21. The data on investigations, prosecutions and convictions collected during the 2010-2012 period and used in preparing the *Global Report* also confirm the extensive impunity for the crime of trafficking. They show that the number of convictions for trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, remains very low. According to the report, about 15 per cent of the countries analysed had not recorded a single conviction during the reporting period, and one fourth of the countries had recorded fewer than 10 convictions. About one third of the countries with few or no recorded convictions, however, detected a significant number of victims. A large number of submissions by Member States highlight the challenges to such prosecutions. While this demonstrates the efforts of local institutions to identify and possibly assist victims, it also shows that traffickers continue to act, for the most part, with impunity.

22. Although trafficking, especially in women and children, is a significant concern on the agenda of Governments and non-governmental actors globally, anti-trafficking interventions frequently do not sufficiently respond to the specific needs of women and girls. Responses to trafficking continue to place a greater focus on the prosecution and conviction of traffickers rather than on support for victims. As a result, many interventions to address trafficking may not be effective or empowering for victims.

23. Significant change in this area is unlikely without the provision of adequate support through specialized and comprehensive services. International organizations and human rights bodies[8] have called upon Member States to ensure, at a minimum,

[8] See the report of the Human Rights Council Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (A/HRC/32/44).

that women and girls who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation purposes have the right to access sexual and reproductive health services, are not subject to violence or discrimination by State agents or private persons and have access to equal protection under the law.

24. In addition to improving efforts by the criminal justice system, the prevention of trafficking requires much more attention than it has received to date. The root causes of and risk factors for the trafficking of women and girls include gendered poverty, lack of viable employment opportunities and limited access to education. These factors may result in desperate attempts to seek other viable economic opportunities. Efforts to flee histories of abuse also prompt women and girls to take risks that may lead to them being trafficked. In addition, the lack of a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach in labour laws and regulations, and gender-blind migration laws and policies, as well as persistent and pervasive gender inequality and discrimination, continue to fuel the trafficking in women and girls.

25. Prevention efforts are still very much limited to education and awareness-raising campaigns and, more recently, to interventions that address the demand for trafficking. While important, those initiatives are not enough to adequately respond to the complex causes of trafficking, especially those related to the exploitation of women and girls. It is therefore imperative that, in addition to the measures taken to hold criminals accountable and the services provided to ensure that victims are treated with dignity and respect, more action be taken to address the root causes of and factors that contribute to trafficking.

IV. Actions taken by Member States and the United Nations system to address the issue of trafficking in women and girls

26. The following section outlines the measures taken by Member States[9] and United Nations entities[10] to address trafficking in women and girls. To the extent reported, the measures that address the links between trafficking and migration are highlighted, as are the measures to protect from trafficking refugees and persons internally displaced as a result of conflict and disaster.

A. Laws, policies and accountability for trafficking

27. International law obligates and guides States with respect to the adoption of anti-trafficking laws and policies, and the adherence of States to relevant treaties is indicative of their commitment to action. Many of the reporting Member States are

[9] Thirty-nine Member States made submissions to this report, including Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Malawi, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Turkey and Uganda.

[10] Inputs were received from six United Nations entities: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; International Organization for Migration.

parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as being parties to various regional, multilateral and bilateral agreements and arrangements. Many of those arrangements, however, continue to focus on efforts to apprehend and prosecute traffickers rather than on cooperation to prevent trafficking or to provide victim support and assistance.

28. In addition to criminalizing trafficking within the framework of criminal or penal law, an increasing number of Member States have established legal provisions with respect to victim protection and support, including legal assistance, temporary and/or permanent residency permits and reflection periods, as well as protection for witnesses during criminal proceedings (Argentina, Australia, Djibouti, France, Serbia and Turkey). Such interventions have contributed to the enhancement of survivors' access to justice by obtaining more convictions. Some States also highlighted the availability of civil and criminal remedies, victim compensation and/or reparation orders for victims of human trafficking (Argentina, Armenia, Australia and France). Recognizing that it is often difficult for victims of trafficking to seek justice, because of the challenges of engaging with various branches of the judicial system or different legal systems, some countries endeavoured to simplify access (Switzerland) or to facilitate access through the provision of legal counselling (Argentina).

29. As many migrants become vulnerable to trafficking during various stages of the migration process, Member States are increasingly taking into consideration the specific vulnerabilities of migrants to trafficking, particularly women and girls, in new legislation (Greece, Italy and Sweden) and policies (Czech Republic, Greece, Morocco and Sri Lanka). Several Member States have revised their existing immigration law to prevent the repatriation of selected undocumented foreigners and stateless persons in order to protect them from trafficking and violence (Azerbaijan, Belgium, Greece and Italy). Others have taken measures to protect and assist migrant women through national action plans and strategies on domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking (Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Japan and Lebanon). Italy highlighted its allocation of financial resources to implement migration and trafficking policies that are gender sensitive and respectful of migrants' human rights, while the Bureau of Foreign Employment in Sri Lanka is addressing the links between trafficking and labour migration.

30. The United Nations system has supported the work of Member States in developing laws and improving law enforcement and criminal justice responses. They have also helped to address issues relating to migration policies and programmes to reduce the vulnerability of migrants to trafficking. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNODC have contributed to the development of legislation to address trafficking. UNODC and UN-Women have developed specific tools for law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges. United Nations entities have supported the efforts of Member States to better reflect a human rights-based approach in migration policies and to ensure that measures to control undocumented migration take into consideration the risks of trafficking and exploitation (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNODC, UN-Women and IOM).

31. The United Nations system, encouraged by the work of the Security Council, has also stepped up its efforts to address trafficking in the context of conflicts and disasters. At a recent open debate concerning sexual violence in conflict, held in the Security Council on 2 June 2016, many Member States referred to the increased vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking in times of conflict and called for gender-sensitive and responsive approaches to the issue (see S/PV.7704).

B. Prevention of trafficking

32. The majority of Member States focused their contributions to the present report on their efforts to criminalize trafficking and their approaches to providing victims, particularly women and girls, with protection and support services following their victimization. Prevention strategies, however, are also critical to tackling this challenge. Education, training and awareness-raising programmes to improve knowledge and awareness of human trafficking and its risks remain the most common measures being implemented by the majority of reporting Member States. Increased attention is also being given to reducing the demand for forced labour through initiatives aimed at sensitizing and involving private sector partners.

33. Other activities undertaken by States include communication through electronic and print media and discussions on the prevention of human trafficking as part of school and university curricula. Many of the activities are being carried out in multiple languages and in cooperation with partners, including non-governmental organizations, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions and members of the media and the business sector. Member States also provided various types of information in multiple languages to women migrant workers in countries of origin and destination (Burkina Faso, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Singapore). Information campaigns have also been developed to target specific groups, such as children and young people (Hungary, Peru and Serbia); women who may be vulnerable to trafficking under the guise of marriage (Armenia and Ukraine); indigenous and aboriginal communities (Peru); domestic workers (Switzerland); rural populations (Georgia); and the tourism sector (Dominican Republic, Mexico and Philippines). Georgia undertook a campaign targeting women and girls who may be trafficked for the purposes of surrogacy. Paraguay worked, through its Ministry of Labour and Social Security, to increase the knowledge of target populations about immigration rights and risks.

34. Awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns targeting the private sector have also been launched (Georgia, Peru, Singapore and Sweden), some of them aimed at the tourism sector (Morocco), the tobacco industry (Malawi) or the entertainment and restaurant sectors (Republic of Korea). In Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, IOM is working with the Governments, as well as workers' unions and employers' associations, to address the exploitative recruitment of migrants, especially women, into labour supply chains. As female migrant workers are highly vulnerable to discrimination, poor working conditions, abuse, exploitation and, at times, human trafficking, IOM seeks to empower businesses to better understand and respond to the complex human and labour rights challenges that are posed by unethical recruitment practices within their supply chains.

35. There has been an increase in the identification and addressing of factors that fuel the demand for trafficking in human beings, with a specific focus on private sector actors and consumers. Measures have focused on raising the costs of using such labour (Greece, Italy and Japan) and improving labour conditions in sectors likely to use victims trafficked for labour exploitation by strengthening and enforcing labour standards and regulations (Czech Republic, Mexico and Qatar). The private sector, in collaboration with labour unions, has addressed exploitative labour practices within supply chains (Austria), as well as formulated consumer-based initiatives against products made with the use of trafficked labour (Finland and New Zealand).

36. Very few Member States reported efforts to address root causes of human trafficking such as poverty, unemployment, gender inequality and economic inequality. Greece and Peru are integrating prevention measures that address economic vulnerability into national policies, with specific focus on female migrants and refugees. Other Member States reported the provision of skills training to migrants to protect them from becoming vulnerable to traffickers (Albania, Colombia, Morocco and Republic of Korea). IOM prevention activities seek to enhance economic and livelihood opportunities and access to social services, as well as community infrastructure in at-risk areas, such as refugee camps and transition zones.

37. United Nations entities are addressing prevention and awareness-raising initiatives through support to high-level dialogues, international conferences and national campaigns on trafficking (Department of Economic and Social Affairs; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Women, UNODC and IOM). It is also important to mention the United Nations Global Compact, which aims to engage the private sector in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the target on trafficking; a specific example of such engagement is the Business Action Pledge in Response to the Refugee Crisis.[11] United Nations entities, including IOM, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNODC and UN-Women, prominently marked the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, on 30 July. Such initiatives, high-level dialogues, international conferences and international days provide excellent opportunities for consistently and systematically considering the specific needs of women and girls. However, few of the efforts reported dealt with the root causes or risk factors for trafficking. This is a significant gap and challenge in the overall response to trafficking in women and girls.

38. With respect to the increased risk of trafficking in women and girls in humanitarian crisis situations, only a few Member States (Colombia and Nepal) made reference to specific vulnerabilities resulting from conflicts and disasters. The United Nations system is working in partnership with countries at the national and regional levels to enhance the protection of refugee and displaced women and girls (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and UN-Women). Given the devastating consequences and increased risk of women and girls being trafficked in situations of conflict and natural disaster, the apparent dearth of experience and information on approaches is a critical gap for policymakers.

[11] United Nations Global Compact and UNHCR, "Business action pledge in response to the refugee crisis", 2016. Available from www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/refugee-crisis.

C. Multisectoral services and programmes for trafficking victims

39. In an increasing number of Member States, protection and support services are available to women and children who are victims of trafficking. Such services include medical, psychological, legal, social and financial assistance, as well as witness protection and shelters, which are often run in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and with the financial support of Governments (Argentina, Greece, Monaco and Turkey). In order to facilitate access to services, Member States have put in place national referral mechanisms and/or hotlines for victims and their families (Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, China, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan and Sri Lanka). Tunisia recently developed an information guide on the services available to victims of trafficking. In Italy, victims of trafficking play the role of "cultural mediators" in delivering services and providing information to victims. While the majority of Member States reported that services were available to victims, only some of them (Australia, China, Japan and Peru) provided information on either the number of victims accessing such services or the funding allocated for the provision of such services.

40. Women and girls who are victims of trafficking need various services to help them to recover from their abusive experience and to ensure that they are not again exposed to violence. To achieve this, several Member States have put in place services and mechanisms to protect identified trafficked women and girls, including through the provision of information on services available to survivors of violence (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines and Singapore). Such services took the form of multilingual telephone hotlines, e-mail addresses and the provision of information on shelters, legal aid, health services, compensation and redress. Certain Member States highlighted the importance of establishing partnerships with non-State actors in the provision of those services (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Philippines and Singapore). With support from UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM a number of countries have set up a dedicated initiative to protect the rights of migrant women and children, with a particular focus on the protection and delivery of services to vulnerable unaccompanied, trafficked and separated children (Croatia, Greece, Serbia, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).

41. The correct identification of victims is essential to the delivery of services. Victims of trafficking must also be properly identified so that they are not charged and prosecuted for crimes arising from being trafficked. For example, in some cases, women and girls are not identified as victims of trafficking, but instead are detained and deported as illegal migrants, particularly as immigration laws and policies are becoming stricter. While the identification of victims remains challenging for Member States, various countries have increased their efforts in this area. Australia, Croatia, Italy, Serbia, Singapore, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste and Uganda have conducted training of immigration and law enforcement officers to improve screening tools to identify trafficked persons. Some of the training specifically focused on children and unaccompanied minors, with support from UNICEF. Some Member States reported on programmes for the rehabilitation, reintegration and return of victims, in cooperation with IOM and/or non-governmental organizations, in order to ensure sensitive and victim-centred responses, including assistance in the identification of victims (Cambodia, Malta, Peru and Switzerland).

42. A majority of reporting Member States referred to the provision of temporary and/or permanent residency permits. With some exceptions (Australia, Colombia and Finland), the provision of temporary or extended stays was contingent on the cooperation of victims with law enforcement and their participation in prosecutions. Despite such contingencies, immediate protection support and assistance were available. Tying the granting of temporary or permanent residence to the participation of victims in the criminal justice system remains a challenge to the development of a victim-centred and rights-based response to trafficking in human beings.

43. When dealing with the trafficking of women and girls, professionals from various sectors that respond to trafficking in general require training to deal with trafficking in a gender-sensitive and effective manner. Nearly all Member States reported that they had provided training and produced guidelines/manuals on trafficking in women and girls and, in some cases, on the human rights of women and children. Such training was directed at a broad range of beneficiaries, including government officials, in particular immigration personnel, police officers, prosecutors, judicial personnel, border officials, social and health workers, teachers, workplace/labour inspectors, staff in detention facilities, military and peacekeeping personnel, transport personnel and others who might come into contact with women and girls who have been victims of trafficking. The scope of training included the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators and the identification, protection of and support to victims. Armenia added training in regional administration centres and for mayors of villages with high rates of seasonal migration to improve the response at the lowest decentralized level.

44. United Nations entities (UNICEF, UNODC and UN-Women) also organized training and capacity-building events on trafficking, in cooperation with other organizations, institutions and Member States. UNICEF, for example, engaged in capacity-building with police, prosecutors and judges in more than 80 countries, with specific focus on the most affected countries in the Middle East and the Balkans. UN-Women helped to increase the capacity of Governments and civil society to develop strategies for preventing trafficking in women and girls in Afghanistan, India and Jordan. In Sri Lanka, training by IOM of the police included a module on referrals and on how to provide a gender-sensitive response to trafficking. UNICEF and UNFPA launched and disseminated the revised guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action,[12] which include guidance relating to trafficking and the protection of women and girls from violence in such contexts.

45. The United Nations system also contributes to the protection of and support for victims of trafficking through the provision of funds to non-governmental organizations to enhance the services they provide. UNODC continued to manage the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, established under the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Two global calls for proposals were issued in 2011 and 2014 to identify projects to provide assistance to victims. As at May 2016, the Trust Fund had supported the projects of 30 non-governmental organizations in 26 countries around the world with paid and committed grants

[12] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action, 2015". Available from http://gbvguidelines.org/.

worth $1.75 million. Projects are directly assisting around 3,500 trafficked persons per year with services such as the provision of basic shelter, psychosocial support, legal counselling and representation in court, education and vocational training, primary health care and small stipends.

D. Data and research

46. Data are crucial for designing and implementing effective policies and programmes that tackle violence and discrimination against women and girls in general and trafficking in particular. Research is also essential to the development and implementation of better legislation and policies as well as other targeted measures, including services for victims. Just as the number of cases that come to the attention of the police, courts or service providers is small, methodologies for the collection of data differ and estimates of the number of victims vary, making it difficult to compare experiences and insights, draw conclusions and approach the problem in a more systematic and effective way.

47. The scant information on the scope of trafficking of women and girls at the country level continues to be a concern worldwide. Member States drew attention to their efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data on migrants and refugees in general (Argentina, Armenia, Poland, Sri Lanka and Ukraine); violence against women and girls in general, including trafficking (Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Namibia and Poland); and migrant women, including trafficked women and survivors of violence, to improve their access to justice (Brazil). Some Member States reported activities aimed at strengthening institutional mechanisms at the national or local level that are responsible for the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on gender equality issues in general (Colombia, Georgia, Mexico, Singapore, Sweden, Timor-Leste and Uganda).

48. Some Member States reported efforts to initiate, enhance or diversify the collection and analysis of data on trafficking in persons in order to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of trafficking as well as the extent of the gaps in knowledge and understanding of the issue. Those efforts included research programmes, studies or training, sometimes in cooperation with research institutes (Argentina, Armenia, Mexico and Switzerland). Many Member States collected some forms of administrative data from various services, some of which were disaggregated by sex and/or age (Argentina, Armenia, Italy and Monaco). While those are primarily administrative data from the criminal justice system, some Member States also have data from victim services (Australia and Switzerland) or from government departments, such as those responsible for social services (Argentina). A small number of Member States collected a broader range of data, including on the identified causes of trafficking in women and children, the nationalities of victims and the identified forms of exploitation. Romania continues to produce an annual report on the situation of trafficking in that country, based on data collected on identified victims, and Denmark has developed a set of indicators against which to collect data.

49. United Nations entities contributed to the overall bank of knowledge on trafficking through the collection of data and research undertaken to better understand and improve responses to trafficking. They did so in a number of ways, including by supporting studies and research, compiling and maintaining or coordinating global

trafficking statistics and databases (UNICEF, UNODC, International Labour Organization (ILO) and IOM) and developing databases on the jurisprudence of human rights mechanisms (OHCHR) or judicial outcomes of human trafficking (UNODC). IOM has the largest database on victims of human trafficking in the world and has teamed up with other leaders in this field to develop and host the largest open access, multi-stakeholder repository of data on human trafficking. Through the development of its human trafficking data portal, IOM will rapidly enhance the evidence base for the development and evaluation of anti-trafficking responses.

50. IOM also conducted quantitative and qualitative research on irregular migration routes and trends, mixed migration flows, the causes and consequences of human trafficking and migrant exploitation as well as on protection responses, and the structures, motivations and modus operandi of organized criminal groups. ILO has helped to develop an international labour migration statistics database for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The data collected will be sex-disaggregated to enable a more detailed understanding of gender differences in migration decisions and outcomes. UNODC continues to prepare the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, to manage the human trafficking case law database and to develop methodologies to measure the hidden numbers of trafficking victims worldwide, particularly in the light of the need for Member States to monitor progress on several Sustainable Development Goals that explicitly refer to trafficking in persons.

E. United Nations coordination on trafficking

51. The United Nations system continues to coordinate interventions to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to protect and support victims of trafficking, in particular through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. In October 2014, the Group published its second policy paper, which provides guidance to organizations and practitioners by mapping the dimensions of the demand for labour that is likely to be met through trafficking and by highlighting strategies that can be used to address it.[13]

52. In 2015, ILO launched Alliance 8.7 to coordinate interventions relating to target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. Alliance 8.7 will play a crucial role in coordinating with Governments and the private sector. The engagement of the private sector in advancing sustainable development to prevent global instability is also one of the targets of the forthcoming United Nations Private Sector Forum 2016, which is being organized by the United Nations Global Compact. Discussions will cover the prevention of and response to trafficking, with a focus on the demand side.

[13] Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, "Preventing trafficking in persons by addressing demand". Available from http://icat.network/sites/default/files/publications/documents/ICAT_Demand_paper_-_FINAL_0.pdf.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

53. **States have demonstrated their commitment to achieving gender equality and ending all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking, through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and other international agreements.**

54. **States have made some strides towards ensuring that laws, policies and programmes to prevent and respond to trafficking in women and girls are gender sensitive and responsive, but further efforts are still required. States do not sufficiently differentiate between and respond to the risks faced by women and girls, who are more vulnerable to trafficking, in particular for specific forms of exploitation such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced marriage.**

55. **Adherence to relevant international instruments and their implementation continue to increase. While States are taking action aimed at ensuring that both existing and new laws are enforced consistently and effectively and that law enforcement officers are adequately trained, prosecution rates continue to be low.**

56. **The evidence on the links between trafficking and migration continues to grow, but further work is required both to better understand the linkages and to develop more effective responses to eliminate the risk of trafficking in the migration process. Although a greater number of Member States are responding to the connections between trafficking, migration and the demand for labour, the laws governing each of these areas have not been harmonized in line with human rights principles. The majority of laws also remain blind to the specific issues and risks women and girls face.**

57. **Identifying the victims of trafficking remains challenging, although there is a greater focus on building the capacity of officials to do so. While many countries have established or enhanced support services for trafficked persons, especially women and children, temporary and/or permanent residence is not available to all victims, irrespective of their ability or willingness to participate in criminal proceedings. A human rights-based approach to trafficking requires that full support and assistance be provided to all victims of trafficking, irrespective of their willingness to engage in criminal proceedings.**

58. **Recent global data have demonstrated that women feature prominently in the number of those convicted for trafficking crimes, in contrast to women's involvement in all other crimes. The explanations for this disparity remain largely speculative and it therefore requires research and analysis.**

59. **Despite increased efforts to improve evidence and knowledge on the scope and nature of trafficking in women and girls, data continue to be unreliable and deficient or focused primarily on outcomes in the criminal justice system. More comprehensive data, collected and analysed in a globally consistent and comparable manner, allow for the development of improved and more targeted solutions and better sharing of experiences, and are required to measure progress in reaching the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals relating to trafficking.**

60. Responses to trafficking need to be considered along a conflict and crisis-peace-development continuum. There is little information on how Member States are addressing the increased vulnerability of women and children to exploitation and trafficking among refugees, those seeking asylum and persons internally displaced as a result of conflict and disaster.

B. Recommendations

61. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their human rights must be at the core of all international policy commitments, including the forthcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, and all policies and actions to address such movements.

62. States should ensure that the prevention of and responses to trafficking fully take into account the gender- and age-specific aspects of this violation of human rights. They should, in particular, address the specific needs of women and girls, who are the primary victims of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and domestic servitude. The responses should also address gender-based discrimination and gender inequality as root causes as well as the risk factors that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking.

63. States should ensure that specific laws that criminalize all forms of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, are in place in accordance with the standards set by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its associated Protocols. Those laws should also be enforced to ensure that all perpetrators, especially those at the helm of trafficking operations, are held accountable for all their crimes.

64. States should expand prevention measures and address the factors that make people, especially women and girls, vulnerable to trafficking. Those efforts must aim to address, inter alia, poverty and unemployment, access to education, the risks posed by unsafe migration processes and gender-based discrimination. Groups that are at increased risk of becoming victims of trafficking, such as women migrant workers, should be specifically targeted.

65. States should ensure coherence between the laws on and measures responding to migration, labour and trafficking. Such laws and measures should be based on human rights principles and must be gender sensitive to ensure that the human rights of migrant women and girls, including migrant women workers, are protected throughout the migration and employment process and provide effective protection against trafficking. States should also ensure that measures aimed at addressing irregular migration and combating transnational organized crime do not adversely affect the enjoyment of their human rights and dignity by trafficked women and girls and those vulnerable to trafficking in the migration cycle, including before departure, during transit, at borders, in destination countries and upon safe return.

66. States, together with relevant United Nations entities, should undertake further research into the links between migration and trafficking to guide the development of age- and gender-sensitive interventions that address the vulnerability of women and girl migrants.

67. Given the increased vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking during conflicts and disasters, as well as the devastating consequences for women and girls in such circumstances, gender-sensitive responses by States to trafficking in those contexts is required. States should also include the prevention of trafficking in women and girls in all national, regional and international initiatives taken in response to conflicts and disasters. States and relevant stakeholders should also include anti-trafficking and protection measures in disaster risk management plans as well as in recovery/post-conflict strategies.

68. The United Nations system and other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should cooperate with Governments with a view to improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex- and age-disaggregated data to help to elucidate the gender dimensions of trafficking in human beings, especially in the contexts of migration, armed conflict, disasters and humanitarian emergencies, which expose women and girls to further human rights violations.

69. The United Nations system, together with relevant research bodies, should further investigate the significant disparity in conviction rates for women in relation to trafficking compared with crime in general.

70. The United Nations system should also continue to support national efforts to address trafficking in women and girls in a coordinated way to ensure effective implementation and evaluation in a manner that provides positive outcomes for women and girls.